



State of Wisconsin
Department of Public Instruction
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

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**Burmaster dedicates transitional living facility
for blind and visually impaired students**

MADISON—State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster will dedicate LIFEhouse, a residence for students at the Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (WCBVI), at a grand opening ceremony in Janesville at 10 a.m. on Friday, May 13. Staff and students, parents, local legislators, volunteers, and members of organizations who serve blind and visually impaired persons will gather to dedicate this important new educational resource. LIFEhouse, for Learning Independence From Experience house, represents a new, innovative way to prepare students with visual impairments to move from a school environment to an adult living environment and into the world of higher education and work.

“The need for specific instruction to develop independent living skills is well recognized by educators of the visually impaired,” said Burmaster. “Our LIFEhouse project is an example of how a community gathers around its shared values to benefit Wisconsin’s children. We believe visually impaired and blind children should have full access to a quality education to become productive, independent citizens.”

LIFEhouse was developed to expand the core curriculum for students with visual impairments to include independent living skills such as managing budgets, preparing meals, and cooperating and collaborating with others. LIFEhouse will allow WCBVI to provide more instruction on orientation and mobility, social interaction skills, independent living skills, career and vocational education, assistive technology, and other life skills that are best practiced in an independent living setting that is more like a college dorm or a shared apartment than the more supportive school environment.

State educators, legislators, and WCBVI students and alumni have supported this project. WCBVI students participated by cleaning, stripping wallpaper, assembling storage racks, shopping for appliances that suit their needs, and meeting with interior designers to make the house comfortable and practical.

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